

**REMARKS**

Reconsideration and allowance of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action dated September 23, 2004.

By the present Amendment, claims 1-18 has been canceled, without prejudice to the Applicants' right to proceed with the subject matter of these claims in a Continuation and/or Divisional application. Also by the present Amendment, new claims 18-27 are presented for examination. With regard to this, it is noted that the new claims 19-27 are directed to the elected embodiment 6 (i.e., the embodiment shown in Figs. 10-12, as indicated in the election requirement of May 10, 2004, and as elected by the Response to Election of Species Requirement filed on August 10, 2004). In particular, the newly presented claims 19-27 further clarify the distinctions of this elected embodiment over the cited prior art.

Reconsideration and removal of the 35 U.S.C. § 103 rejection based on USP 5930163 to Hara in view of USP 5072286 to Minami is respectfully requested. By the present Amendment, new independent claim 19 replaces original independent claim 1. In addition to features defined in claim 1, newly presented claim 19 includes the additional features of:

"wherein said input terminal of said first inverter is a first gate electrode commonly belonging to said first N-channel MOS transistor and said first P-channel MOS transistor,

wherein said input terminal of said second inverter is a second gate electrode commonly belonging to said second N-channel MOS transistor and said second P-channel MOS transistor,

wherein said first and second gate electrodes are connected to said second and third diffusion layers via silicide in first and second connect regions, respectively, and

wherein both of said first and second connect regions are formed in said N-type well region."

These features are supported, for example, by Fig. 10 and the discussion on page 22, lines 7-26 of the specification. Regarding this, it is respectfully submitted that the cited references to Hara and Minami fail to at all teach or suggest these specific features, particularly the structure and arrangement of the first and second gate electrodes and the connection of the two second and third diffusion layers via silicide in first and second connect regions, respectively, in combination with the other claimed elements. In a similar manner, newly presented independent claim 26 also defines the use of silicide for connection between input terminals of the respective first and second inverters and diffusion layers via silicide in first and second connect regions, respectively. These features are also not at all taught or suggest by the cited reference to Hara and Minami. Therefore, reconsideration and allowance of independent claim 19 and independent claim 26, together with their respective dependent claims over the cited references to Hara and Minami is respectfully requested.

Reconsideration and removal of the 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, rejection of the original claims 1, 3-7, 14, 16 and 18 is respectfully requested. With regard to this, it is noted that these claims have now been canceled, which technically obviates this rejection. To the extent that new independent claims 19 and 26 contain similar language to the rejected claims 1 and 16, Applicants respectfully submit that the illustration shown in Figs. 10-12 (of the elected Species VI) and the discussion of these figures found beginning on page 22 clearly provides sufficient support for one of ordinary skill in the art to recognize that the diffusion layers shown in these figures are defined by an isolation layer extending along substantially the entirety of the

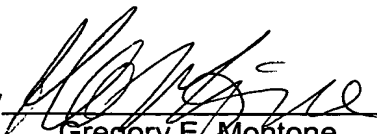
longitudinal sides of the diffusion layers. In particular, it would readily be understandable to one of ordinary skill in the art reviewing Figs. 10-12 and the discussion in the specification on page 22 et seq. regarding them that the outer shapes of the illustrated diffusion layers would be formed in the claimed manner with the claimed relationship to a surrounding isolation layer. Therefore, reconsideration and removal of the 35 U.S.C. P 112, first paragraph, rejection is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes that there are any other points which may be clarified or otherwise disposed of either by telephone discussion or by personal interview, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the number indicated below.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the Antonelli, Terry, Stout & Kraus, LLP Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (Docket No. 500.38532CX1), and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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